

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, ET, US

SUBJECT: SITUATION REPORT NO. 32, SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA

AS OF 0600 HOURS (EST) FEBRUARY 18, 1975

SMALL ARMS FIGHTING HAS BEGUN AGAIN WITHIN ASMARA IN
RESPONSE TO WHAT REUTERS REPORTS AS A RESUMPTION OF BOMBING
RAIDS ON ELF STRONGHOLDS IN ERITREA BY THE ETHIOPIAN AIR
FORCE. RELIABLE SOURCES ARE QUOTED AS SAYING THAT MAI
ATAL, 20 KMS FROM THE RED SEA PORT OF MASSAWA, WAS BOMBED
FOR MORE THAN TWO HOURS. THE EPMG CONTINUES TO AIRLIFT
TROOPS (ANOTHER 700 IN THE LAST TWO DAYS) TO ASMARA. THEIR
FIGHTING CAPABILITY IS RATED LOW BY WESTERN MILITARY
EXPERTS IN ADDIS ABABA. POWER SUPPLIES HAVE BEEN RESTORED
TO ASMARA FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE FIGHTING BEGAN, BUT
FUEL TO OPERATE THE EMERGENCY GENERATOR AT MAI NETI DAM IS
RUNNING LOW.

UPI AND DAVID OTTAWAY OF THE WASHINGTON POST REPORT THE
MASSACRE BY EPMG PARATROOPERS OF AS MANY AS 700 ERITREAN
PRISONERS WHO WERE BELIEVED TO HAVE ESCAPED FROM A POLICE
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COMMANDO CAMP IN ASMARA. A SECOND GROUP OF 374 PRISONERS

WHO BROKE OUT OF A CAMP AT ADI QUALA, SOUTH OF ASMARA, HAVE NOT BEEN INTERDICITED YET BUT ARE BEING SOUGHT BY 1,000 TROOPS. AN OFFICIAL INVESTIGATION HAS BEGUN TO

EXAMINE THESE ATROCITIES, THE WORST IN THE 13-YEAR SEPARATIST REBELLION.

AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR, VICE MINISTER MOHAMED HAMID IBRAHIM, ACTING ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM FOREIGN MINISTER KIFLE, PROTESTED FORMALLY AGAINST VOA BROADCAST OF EPMG'S AMMUNITION RESUPPLY REQUEST. THE ETHIOPIAN CHARGE' IN WASHINGTON WILL REPEAT THE PROTEST TO THE DEPARTMENT. HAMID SAID FOREIGN MINISTER KIFLE FELT THE ANNOUNCEMENT HAD "UNDERMINED OUR NEGOTIATIONS ON THIS MATTER" AND STRONGLY URGED THERE BE NO FURTHER PREMATURE REVELATIONS. EMBASSY ADDIS HAS REFRAINED FROM COMMENTING TO NEWSMEN.

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